ALBERTA FOLKLORE

Quarterly

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THE COVER

Indian cavalcade coming into old Fort Edmonton in the good old days.

—From "Arctic Trader."

Female Moses of The Peace

By

The Late Rev. Alfred Garrioch

This strange story begins with an Englishman named Armson, who panned gold in 1871 at Fort St. John in company with Nigger Dan Williams, Banjo Mike and Twelve-Foot Davis. As fall drew near Armson was heard to say that he intended going south of the Peace River to trap. This he apparently did, taking with him his beautiful Blackfoot wife. The wife, so the story goes, had but one physical imperfection. While chopping wood one day she had struck the second toe of her left foot, leaving a scar which extended from the toenail in the form of a livid ridge.

The Armsons left Fort St. John in a dugout canoe, and Armson stated that in the spring they would return to the Saskatchewan by way of Lesser Slave Lake and the Athabasca. Instead of reappearing, however, the Armsons vanished as though they had dropped off the edge of the earth.

A year later a Blackfoot Indian named Jean was paddling up the Peace in his dugout on the lookout for beaver. Suddenly he observed a small raft floating down towards him upon which a red flag fluttered from a stick. Paddling over, Jean found to his profound surprise a very young baby girl the sole passenger. He lost no time in getting the child ashore, and found that the youngster was in the last stages of starvation. Hurriedly he boiled a duck that he had recently shot, made some soup and fed the baby a few drops. Fortunately there was a camp of Beaver Indians nearby, and Jean carried the baby to an Indian mother, who nursed the child. When they were examining her the Indians discovered a curious mark on the second small toe of the left foot—a mark which one of the Indian women maintained was "older than the child"!

Jean left the child with the Beaver Indians, who broke camp shortly afterwards, taking the baby with them. That was the last to be heard of this female Moses of the Peace for a long time.

Several years later the Reverend Garrioch, pioneer missionary to the Peace, chanced upon a couple from St. Paul, Minnesota, who bore the name of Vinning. The couple had with them an extremely attractive young girl. They confided to Garrioch that the child was not their own, but had been turned over to them by a free trader at Edmonton, who stated he'd got the child from some Indian in the Peace River country. The Vinnings had adopted the child, and were raising her as their own.

Not long after parting from the Vinnings, Garrioch encountered the Indian named Jean. In the course of their travels together Jean told the missionary about finding the white child on the raft. Immediately Garrioch began to suspect that the Vinnings' adopted daughter and the raft baby were one and the same. He set out to discover where the child had come from.

He enlisted the help of a trapper named Sizerman, who eventually discovered the remains of an old trap-line somewhere beyond the South Pine. He followed the marks of the old line until he came to the remains of a cabin across which a huge tree had fallen. Digging in under the tree he discovered two skeletons, one lying on the bed, the other on the floor beside it. Hanging from a peg on the cabin wall was a note-book tied up in a piece of skin. On the floor were rat-chewed remains of a child's rattle, parts of a moss-bag and a shattered gun. But there was no child's skeleton around.

Sizerman carried the note-book to Garrioch, and after reading it through they reconstructed the tragedy of the lone cabin.

The Armsons had put up a comfortable cabin in the autumn of 1871, and spent a profitable winter trapping, for Sizerman had discovered the mouldering skins of many marten and beaver. Probably some time in March a child had been born to Mrs. Armson, and soon afterwards Armson had accidentally shot himself and infection had set in. So weak had he finally become that he was unable to provide food. The woman was also unable to furnish the required sustenance, and father, mother and child w e r e slowly starving to death. When it became obvious that Armson would not recover, his wife staggered down the banks of the river, made a simple raft, placed the child upon it and pushed it out in the current, leaving its future to Destiny. Then she returned to the cabin to die with her husband.

One item from Armson's diary seemed to explain the mark on the child's toe: "Born this day (March 31st, 1872), a girl, perfectly formed, and with vocal organs in fine working condition. When Mrs. Armson's glancing hatchet hit her toe at the mining camp at Fort St. John she inflicted a hatchet mark in duplicate, for on the corresponding toe of her little daughter's foot there is the perfect replica of that scar of hers."

Another item in the diary stated: "May 15th, I am dying . . . effects of accident. My first wife, who died in England, left a son now five. Write to legal firm Blake and Barstow, London, England. Present wife and babe weak from starvation. The Lord will provide."

Garrioch turned the memo of the tragedy over to the couple who had adopted the child, by this time a charming and cultured girl of eighteen. They called her Lily, and she was soon to be married to a handsome young man named Herbert Melvin, fresh over from England. Immediately the foster parents cabled the legal firm of Blake and Barstow, stating the facts, and asking for the name and address of the son Mr. Armson mentioned in his diary.

The reply they received was a shock to all concerned. For the firm wired back that the son's name was *Herbert Melvin!* And it was actually established that the Melvin whom Lily was on the point of marrying was no less than her half-brother!

As Mr. Garrioch states, all this was of course extremely sad and disappointing, "but when you come to think of it, was it not a blessed slip between the cup and the lip as it saved our two young friends from an awful tragedy?"

A year later Lily was married to a young man named Gerald Clive, and not long afterwards Herbert Melvin appeared in Calgary, bringing with him a charming English wife.

This surprising story, taken from the Reverend Alfred Garrioch's interesting little book, "Hatchet Mark in Duplicate," is one of the apparently true legends of the Peace River country. The Editor also heard this story in slightly different form at Fort St. John in 1912.

Yuletide at Old Fort Edmonton

From The Calgary Herald, December 21st, 1935

Let us take a glimpse at an old-time Christmas within the stockaded walls of Fort Edmonton in the days when the West was young—to be exact in the winter of '63. Buffalo still roamed the plains in countless numbers though, for the winter, they had sought the protection of secluded valleys. Only a few months before a desperate battle had been waged by the Crees and Blackfeet in the vicinity of Three Ponds.

It had been a desperate fight, and only the prowess and courage of Chief Crowfoot and the intervention of Father Lacombe, the Apostle of the Northwest, had saved his people from destruction.

On the broad, snow-covered bench overlooking the frozen reaches of the Saskatchewan, a grey stockade of heavy logs flanked with frowning bastions enclosed a square containing log warehouses and trading stores, a Bachelors' Hall, Father Lacombe's little log church, and last, but by no means least, the huge dwelling erected by Chief Factor Rowland —the social centre of the Northwest. It was a massive building seventy feet deep and sixty wide; three stories high, with a gallery overlooking the snow-covered courtyard.

"The walls and ceilings," says Paul Kane, "are painted in a style of the most startling barbaric gaudiness and the ceilings filled with centrepieces of fantastic gilt scrolls, making altogether a saloon which no white man would enter for the first time without a start, and which the Indians always looked on with awe and wonder."

* * *

Outside the gates on this bright and frosty Christmas morning arose the conical tepees of the Crees, their heraldic designs of many colors making a bright patch against the sombre stockades and the white expanse of snow. They had brought word of the death of the beloved Father Lacombe at the Three Ponds fight, and even carried with them a bullet-riddled *capote* said to have been taken from his tent.

Within the Bachelors' Hall youthful traders engaged in riotous fun, jest and laughter, while the more serious exchanged stories of the trail and of buffalo hunts with the *Metis* of the plains.

In the kitchen of the Big House Murdo MacKenzie of Stornoway was engaged in mysterious culinary activities, the savory odours of which were wafted into the ornate Mess room. Elsewhere the stew-

ard, Malcolm Groat, dispensed rations of frozen fish and pemmican, grease and haunches of buffalo meat to scores of hungry Indians, and pannikins of fiery grog to one and all so that they could fittingly drink the health of the factor and long life to the "Company".

Then three dog teams were noted writhing down the far bank of the river until they reached the ice. Ahead careened a carriole drawn by four rangey dogs galloping merrily along, janging their bells, their fluffy tails arched above their backs, their drivers pounding behind on snowshoes.

A group of traders, their *capote* hoods pulled over their heads and their caps about their ears, assembled anxiously at the gateway despite the bitter cold. It was Dick Hardisty, they said, from Rocky Mountain House. As the teams reached the northern bank they disappeared for a moment, then re-appeared nearer and a genial red face appeared protruding from the buffalo robes. Next moment the dog teams swept through the gateway, greeted by a rousing cheer of welcome, for the beaming features within the carriole were those of the much-loved priest and benefactor, Father Lacombe.

The kindly father was promptly assisted from his carriole by a noisy crowd of traders, Indians and *Metis* gay in beaded leggings and fringed buckskin. Next moment his arm was seized by Mr. Christie, and he was ushered through the hospitable portals of the Big House.

* * *

All day long the fort echoed to the merrymaking. *Voyageurs* fraternized with traders, Indian chiefs and buffalo runners. The *chansons* of old Normandie intermingled with the robust songs of the Scottish Highlands, while from the painted lodges without the palisade arose the gambling songs and reverberations of Indian tom-toms as redskin and buffalo runner alike tempted the goddess of chance.

As daylight dwindled and the sun dropped behind the pine-clad hills to the westward, leaving flaming streamers athwart the gold-grey sky, groups of cheerful, laughing men made their w a y over to the Big House, whose windows cast rosy red patterns athwart the blue-white snowdrifts, while from every chimney there arose straight white spirals of smoke far up into the star-spangled sky.

In the brown spaciousness of the huge mess room the cavernous fireplace sent out a cheerful, crackling glow. It flickered upon crossed swords and polished buffalo horns upon the walls and shone redly on paintings from across the sea and stately stuffed heads of antlered bull moose slaughtered in the forests to the northward. Two large red-hot C a r r o n stoves spluttered and crackled comfortably in their effort to get the better of the Frost King, while the lighted candelabra upon the table gleamed upon an array of shining dishes and platters heaped high with the delicacies prepared by Murdo's hands.

* * *

The bell clangs out its clarion call, and there is a noisy surge of humanity towards the festive tables. From behind a smoking buffalo hump the almost indis-

tinguishable form of Factor Christie is to be seen in animated conversation with Father Lacombe, who is telling of the fight between the Blackfeet and the Crees, and how the scattering bullets whizzed about his head, shattering the lodge poles.

For two hours the noise of talk and laughter is almost deafening. The floor is cleared and then arises the skirl of the bagpipes, the rousing strains of the fiddle, the raucous shouts of men and the softer and more musical laughter of women, and the thud, thud of moccasined feet as they pound the stout pine boards in the rhythmic reels and jigs which the Scots have brought with them into the wilderness.

Through the shouts and laughter and sounds of revelry comes the tinkle, tinkle of a bell. It's the bell at Father Lacombe's mission pealing out its summons to midnight mass. There is a rush for the hall to throw on *capotes* and fur caps, and all troop *en masse* to the log chapel within the snow-filled courtyard. Inside those hewed log walls dignified Indians, fur-clad lords of the North, and big-hearted frontiersmen of French, Scotch and English blood, men of simple faith and strong passions, all assembled to hear again the story of the Child of Bethlehem.

"*Aie! Hie!*" these old-time pioneers have told me, "they were great days those—never will we see the like of them again!"

A BACHELOR'S CHRISTMAS DREAM

One Christmas eve a C.P.R. bachelor sat in his lonely quarters in a small prairie town. He was in a retrospective mood, and there passed through his mind visions of Christmases of the long ago when there was always a joyous throng gathered around the gift-laden tree. He recalled letters addressed in cramped little hands to Santa Claus, thought lovingly of dear faces of those far-off days, and felt very dreary. Thinking, too, of his friends who had recently forsaken the ranks of bachelordom, he was overpowered by a sensation of unutterable loneliness. Throwing on his greatcoat and cap he went out into what seemed to him a cold and cheerless night. Wandering down the street, and entering a clothing store, he bought a pair of lady's silk stockings, took them back to his room, hung them in front of the fireplace and pinned to them the following note:

"Dear Santa Claus — Please try and **fill** these for **me** before next Christmas."

Two old ladies in East Calgary were discussing husbands. Said the first: "I have been married three times. Each of my husbands is dead though. They were all cremated."

Her friend was a dear old maiden lady. She had listened attentively to her friend and when she had concluded the sad story of her life she said: "How wonderful are the ways of Providence. Here I've lived all these years and have never been able to get a husband and you've had husbands to burn."

The Crimson Stain

By
Jean W. Godsell

"Mrs. Godsell," remarked my native maid, Rosa Mecredi, one night as my house at Fort Fitzgerald groaned and crackled with the bitter frost, "I am going to tell you a true story about an old medicine man who used to live right here."

"All right, Rosa, go ahead," I said.

"Victoire was a young and pretty girl, and she had only been married to Moonias a short time," went on Rosa, "when young Moise Thunderbird arrived from Fond du Lac. A fine and handsome hunter he was in his beaded buckskin, and all the young, unmarried women of the tribe cast envious eyes upon him. His meat caches were always full; he always had lots of moose skins for moccasins, and his catch of fur was always the biggest in the land. 'Wah! Wah!' they said, 'his woman will never know what it is to starve or freeze when Keewatin, the North Wind, thrashes the spruce trees with his anger and game is scarce.'

"That spring the hunters spent most of their time in the evenings gambling. Usually when the game was getting exciting Moise would drop out and disappear. One night old Wabeno's squaw, while gathering firewood, saw a black shadow cross the trail. Hiding amongst the bushes, afraid to move lest it be a cannibal *weetigo,* she heard voices. 'Truly, I love you,' she heard a soft voice say, 'but I can't go with you. Moonias would kill me.' It was Victoire and Moise. Soon everyone knew what was taking place."

"And what did the husband do?" I asked.

"Nothing. He just went around as though he hadn't heard anything, and each night Victoire and Moise continued to meet, though in the daytime they pretended not to see each other. As the leaves began to turn, Moise loaded his birchbark and set off for his hunting grounds. Hardly had he departed ere Moonias began to complain of feeling sick. For days he lay around his lodge, unable to hunt, wasting slowly to a shadow. One night he told Victoire to call Old Wounded Man, the medicine man.

"Entering Moonias' lodge, the medicine man squatted on a pile of brush and looked into the fire. 'I'll build a conjuring lodge,' he said, 'and speak to my *Manitous.*' A moment later he disappeared.

"The moon was high when he returned to find the lodge filled with weeping squaws and relatives, and Victoire seated near the fire stirring caribou soup in a pot. Hanging his otterskin medicine bag above the sick man's bed, Wounded Man ordered everyone to leave.

" 'You are being conjured,' he told Moonias. 'Some enemy is working bad medicine upon you. I built my conjuring lodge in the woods and talked to my *Manitous* and this is what they told me . . . but do not be afraid. My medicine's so strong that soon you'll be hunting Moosewa and Pisiskiwuk, the Little Brothers of the Forest, again. Tomorrow night the moon

will be at the zenith—that is good. My *Manitous* will be ready.'

"Casting aside the door-flap he called to the weeping Victoire. 'Tomorrow when the moon is high in the night sky bring a white deerskin to my *mutagwan,* and tell your people to be there. *Equonnay!* I have spoken.'

"Next day when they gathered at Wounded Man's Lodge he drew from his medicine bag a buckskin image stuffed with moose hair, supposed to contain the spirit of Moonias' enemy, and buried it in a hole. Fixing his eyes on another little buckskin image the medicine man spoke in loud, commanding tones. When he finished a squeaky voice, like that of a puppy, came from the sky, answering the questions he asked the image in an unknown tongue. The squaws began to whimper, the children cried and h u n g t o their mothers' necks. Even the dogs commenced to bark and whine.

" 'Moonias," he told them, 'has been suffering a bad sickness. He's been conjured by the bad medicine of an enemy. But my medicine is strong. Tonight he is going to get well. When I put my knife through that image I have buried in the ground, that white deerskin,' he pointed to the skin spread out in the centre of the lodge, 'will be stained red with blood. When that happens his enemy will be dead. The evil spell will be broken.'

"Rattling his *she-she-quon,* he gazed up through the smoke-hole. *'Niske!'* he said, 'the moon is in the right position above the evening star.' Lifting high his glittering knife he plunged it time and again into the buried image. The lodge commenced to shake. A fearsome cry c a m e echoing through the night. Yelping with fear, the Indians plunged through the doorway. The skin, which but a few short seconds before had been white as driven snow, was splotched with crimson stains."

* * *

Bending over the moccasin in her lap Rosa remained silent for a moment, as though afraid to break the spell.

"And — what hapnened?" I asked.

"What happened! Next day Moonias was on his feet. Soon he was out trapping. Then, about three months later, a hunting party of Caribou Eater Indians came in from Fond du Lac. For a long time they smoked their pipes in silence, then they told t h a t Moise Thunderbird had suddenly dropped dead. In the midst of feasting and gambling his laughter had been stilled. He'd caught at his throat and collapsed upon the wigwam floor. And, strangest thing of all, he died that very n i g h t that Wounded Man performed the magic in his lodge . . . just when the moon was above the evening star." For a few moments Rosa's eyes bored into mine. "Wah! Wah! Mrs. Godsell, that is true, that story. For my father he was right there at the time."

Rising, I threw another log on the fire. "How is it, Rosa," I asked, "that you tell me this story now?"

"Mrs. Godsell," her face was deeply earnest, "we never tell these stories in the summer time when the spirits are abroad and can hear us. They don't like being talked about. But in the cold weather they are far away and cannot hear, so they are not likely to get offended."

Macleod to Calgary and Return in 1880

By

Cy "Denny" La Nauze

Assistant Commissioner, R.C.M.P., Retired

The following is an exact copy of a letter written to my grandmother by my father, the late ex-Sergt. Thomas La Nause of the N.W.M.P. from "Fort Macleod via Benton, Montana" on "Dec. 9, 1880."

"It is about a month since I have written to you, or anyone, the reason for which you shall know. About four weeks ago 25 of us were sent fully armed and well mounted to Fort Kill-Garry, 150 miles from here northwards along the Rockies where a tribe of Indians (the Sarcees) were giving a good deal of trouble to the small garrison there (consisting of a sergeant and three men) threatening to sack the fort for provisions, also a Hudson Bay Store, and an American trading post. The Indians were almost starving so they were becoming desperate. We accomplished the journey without mishap, only had one snowstorm, and the first night when rolled in my blankets on the prairie, our Commanding Officer and the Indian Agent (Col. Macleod's brother) arrived in camp and brought the mail, containing a letter from you and one from George from Limerick, both of which I read with ease by the moonlight. I suppose our warlike appearance struck terror into the noble savage, as after a couple of days "pow-wowing" and firing off shots, dancing and yelling, they came to terms and agreed to come to this fort for the Winter to be fed, of course, at government expense. It took some days to get carts, etc. to transport the infirm and very young across the prairie and I was put in charge of the whole concern to bring them here, had to divide out the rations each day, when we camped for the night, try and get them to shove ahead as quickly as possible, and keep the chiefs in as good humor as possible, a troublesome enough job it was and sometimes the thermometer 35 below zero. I got my fingers and ear frozen one morning when saddling my horse, having to take my mitts off for a minute or so. It was blowing hard and snowing and I made a rush for it to get to the Fort and send out more provisions, as three days storm prevented us from travelling and grub had run out. I did the 40 odd miles in about five hours, not bad galloping in deep snow, and could just make out the track. Both the Officer and Indian Agent thanked me and said I had done well. One has to be very careful about getting lost on the prairie, as in such weather one is sure to freeze.

I got on first rate with the Indians, and had a good opportunity of studying the customs of the red man, their dances, singing and death dirges, as we had one death, an old man. I slept in a tepee, i.e. an Indian tent, has a fire in the middle and in ordinary weather warm, but some nights while warm in front, your back was quite cold. I was eight days with them and they took three more to

get in after I left them. We had to measure out 420 lbs. of beef and flour per day, each member of a family getting a pound of each. The freezing sensation is not pleasant, one feels as if your fingers were bruised by a hammer when the thawing commences. However, I am all right now.

Frank Mansfield has turned out a good teamster, and drives a four in hand well. He has got frozen also and is off to-morrow to the same Fort with provisions, but expected to be back for Xmas. He sends love to all but can't write this mail. Two days after I got into this Fort we were all aroused from our beds by the alarm of fire, and sure enough the shoemaker's shop close to the stables was in a blaze. We had barely time to turn out all the horses when the whole thing was on fire. Next morning we were all paraded and thanked by the Commanding Officer for our exertions in putting out the fire,

I have been for the last three days herding the horses about three miles from here, a nice life like my former one. We had a nice little ranch to live in and lots of hares and prairie chicken to shoot; but was sent for to-day being required at the Fort. I think now I have told you most of my adventures. I enjoy this sort of business far better than barrack life, but this place is nicer in every way than headquarters.

I have told you about the cold, I will now tell you how suddenly it can change. Yesterday morning we awoke up and there was a soft warm breeze blowing from the Rockies and the snow melting away fast. This hot wind is called the "Chinook" and is the redeeming point in the otherwise severe north-west Winter and we are now going about in shirt sleeves as in Spring. I can't say now I have kept from smoking as I found a pipe most acceptable when camping on the cold snow covered prairie, and I suppose I never enjoyed a cup of tea properly before.

CHARLES D. LA NAUZE, P.M.,
Lacombe.

WHEN TRADERS CAME TO TOWN

By "Denny LaNauze

Jim Nagle, fur trader at Fort Good Hope was one of those characters wedded to the North who rarely came "Outside". He was a great fur getter, a good host, and was always immaculate. After a spell of seven years in the Silent Places he thought he would go to Quebec to visit his relations, but like many other Northerners with similar ideas he never got beyond Edmonton. Once he got as far as the C.P.R. depot, but he'd been celebratng his departure so happily that he raised somewhat of a disturbance, tried to board a train on the move, failed, and was thrown into the hoosegow for the night. Next day he appeared before an Edmonton Magistrate, who'd always taken a kindly view of the peculiar relaxations of Northerners.

"And what have you to say, Mr. Nagle?" demanded the Magistrate.

"Well, your Honour," Jim replied, "all I can remember that I went to catch a train to take to visit Quebec once more—and ran after it."

"Then," remarked the Magistrate, "you evidently **didn't** catch your train?"

"No, your Worship," replied Jim, **"but I sure made it puff some!"**

The Hermit of the Barrens

By

Philip H. Godsell, F.R.G.S.

Through the Arctic twilight of the tundra, defying death and starvation, wandered a ghostly, fur-clad figure, a glossy beard reaching to his waist, his sole companions the caribou, the prehistoric musk-oxen, ravening wolves and Arctic foxes. . . .

At Fort Resolution on the dismal shores of Great Slave Lake I first ran across the Hermit of the Barrens. With clanging signal bells and fluttering pennants, the *Distributor*, flagship of the Hudson's Bay Company, had just dropped anchor before this famed gateway to the land of the caribou and the musk-ox. Along the canoe-littered waterfront rose hundreds of smoke-stained caribou-skin tepees, the summer encampment of the Yellowknives and Dog-Ribs, in from the Land of Little Sticks to receive King George's treaty money and barter their bear and beaver pelts with Pierre Mercredi, the factor.

Clubbing my way through the snarling horde of slat-ribbed curs I had shaken hands with old Pierre when down the trail loped a little man in moccasins and flapping overalls. Tousled hair hung about his shoulders, a glossy black beard flowed to his waist, and his gaunt, emaciated face was dark as any Indian's. But it was his eyes that held me spellbound. Deep-set, blue and bloodshot, there was something uncanny in their weird, unnatural brilliance. When he spoke it was with a cultured Oxford accent, and I knew it was Jack Hornby, The Hermit of the Barrens.

For a moment those sunken eyes blazed into mine as he asked for a trading outfit to take into the Barrens. A suggestion I was forced to decline since there would be nobody there save Hornby and his huskies. Turning abruptly on his heel he padded back along the trail.

"One of these days," growled Pierre, "Jack Hornby'll *stay* in the Barrens, and the wolves'll pick his bones. Last winter," his dark eyes snapped, "he spent in a stinking wolf den 'way out in the Barrens. This spring some Dog-Ribs went ashore to shoot a wolf—and they found the wolf was Hornby—starving, so weak he could hardly crawl. And them Injuns," he mopped his face angrily, "wasted two weeks hunting caribou and nursing him around . . . and never paid their fur debts."

A recluse and a hermit, a wanderer in the frozen reaches of the blizzard-swept Barrens, Jack Hornby was known to every redskin, riverman and roughneck from the end of steel to the Polar Sea. Even the Indians and Eskimos dreaded those inhospitable Barrens where Hornby made his home. True, caribou passed over them in countless millions, but one never knew where, or when, the herds would pass, and many a bleached skeleton testified that the caribou didn't always follow the regular paths of migration. Yet Hornby seemed to thrive on the hardship and loneliness, and, like Daniel Boone, considered the country overcrowded if there was a cabin a hundred miles away.

Brought up to a life of luxury, and trained for the British Diplomatic Service, he had forsaken all to answer the call of the wild. In the fall he would disappear from some fur fort along the Mackenzie, with a rifle, ammunition, a pack-dog and a canoe, to be swallowed up in the Arctic Barrens. A year, perhaps two years, later he would turn up at some other fort hundreds of miles away, gaunt, unkempt and hungry, sell his furs and disappear again. One of the few men who had actually seen, and hunted, the prehistoric musk-ox, and knew the inner mysteries of this Land of Cain, Hornby looked with jealous eyes on these Barrens as his own exclusive playground.

* * *

A year after I met him Hornby squatted across a campfire in the Rockies at Banff. "Yes," he told the tall, rangey Imperial Army officer with the square jaw and clipped moustache who sat beside him, "this country's too damned civilized. You should winter with me in the Barrens. Thousands of square miles of country that has never seen a human footprint, and millions upon millions of caribou. We might even," suggested Hornby, "find the black musk-oxen the Dog-Ribs say live along the Thelon."

Captain Critchell-Bullock was thrilled. In Edmonton he had met The Hermit of the Barrens, and Hornby had told him of the North, of the lure of the Silent Places, and, being Hornby, he had boasted of how he could master starvation by the exercise of will-power. Finally they had taken a jaunt to Banff to get acquainted. Before they retired everything was settled. They would organize an expedition and expose the mysteries of the Barrens to the world in photographs and movie films. Bullock would supply the funds, and Hornby would guide him into the heart of the tundra, and show him how to "starve like a gentleman." If Bullock had only known Hornby he would have realized that he would not only starve, but probably freeze as well.

Before the ice was out of the Saskatchewan Hornby had left in a wrinkled suit for Ottawa to interest the Government. Bullock, spending freely, bought movie cameras, guns, rifles, ammunition, and chemicals with which to preserve the flora and fauna of the land.

Suddenly came a note. Hornby was leaving for England. Next a cryptic wire—Hornby had sailed. Then, from England, the last smashing blow, a cable telling Bullock to cancel the expedition!

To Bullock, unaware of Hornby's peculiar ways and jealousy of his beloved Barrens, the message was a blow. But the Captain didn't take it sitting down. He cabled Hornby that he was hiring guides and going in alone. Back came Hornby's frantic message, telling him to wait—he was sailing on the first steamer.

When he returned to Edmonton Hornby eyed the costly outfit with disgust. "Where do you figure on putting all that junk?" he demanded. "A frying pan, a kettle, a gun and a canoe, that's all we need. It's best to travel light."

When they reached Fort Reliance and prepared to pack canoes and baggage across Pike's Portage into the Barrens, Hornby ordered all scientific equipment and "ex-

cess baggage" left behind. In vain Bullock protested that his time would be wasted without it. But he was in Hornby's kingdom now, and the little man wasn't disposed to share his rule with anyone. The "excess baggage" stayed behind!

In the heart of the untrodden tundra the Hermit halted. Apalled by the utter desolation, Bullock gazed about him. In all directions extended the grey-white stretches of the land that God forgot. Not a tree, not a solitary hill broke the dread monotony. It was like a world of nothingness enveloped in a winding sheet of snow. Hornby drove a shovel into a frozen eskar. "Here's a wolf den, Bullock. This'll make as a good a home as any, and save a lot of digging."

In that odoriferous wolf den in the heart of the Arctic Barrens they prepared to spend the winter. But not the kind of winter the scientifically-minded Bullock had anticipated. Instead, it was a winter of utter misery deep in the bowels of the earth. In a tin box-stove a doubtful fire of half-green willow twigs spluttered protestingly, filling the place with acrid fumes that caused the Captain's eyes to burn. It was crude, cold and comfortless, and at times the very earth would explode with cannon-like reverberations as biting blizzards swept the starlit world and empurpled snow-drifts with devastating fury.

The tougher things became the more Hornby seemed to thrive. Like a grey ghost in a pall of white, his black beard waving in the frigid blasts, he scoured the blizzard-flailed tundra with his rifle. Frost-blackened and weary he would haul back on his battered sled a wolf carcass, an Arctic fox, or a caribou, exulting in his power to defy the frigid forces of the Frost King.

Somewhere Hornby had heard there was some scientific mystery about the mice of the Barrens. Into an empty coffee tin he dropped three tiny carcasses. When his false teeth bothered him he dropped them in as well. Bullock gasped, but Hornby explained that cold killed all germs in the Barrens.

Slowly, with nerve-wracking monotony, the leaden days dragged by and the Captain found himself, week after week, lying on his back gazing at the roof of the wolf den instead of pursuing scientific investigations with which to recover his money. Not only had Hornby fulfilled his promise to show hom how to "starve like a gentleman," he was also showing him how to freeze as well!

Strained silences filled that crazy hovel in the heart of the snow-bound Barrens. There were times when neither dared look into the other's eyes. Times again when, suppressed resentment over trifles, breaking all restraint, burst into consuming flame, tumbling out in bitter, recriminating words. The curse of the Northland was upon them!

* * *

Two hundred and fifty miles south-west of Hornby's wolf den Fort Resolution lay buried deep in mountainous drifts of snow. It was the Eagle Moon—the month of February. So cold was it that even the fur-bearing animals kept to their holes, and the Indians to their lodge fires. Slowly, but with irresistible force, the whisperings

of the moccasin telegraph sped from tepee to tepee. Tragedy had struck somewhere in those blizzard-swept solitudes to the northward. From the caribou country an Indian runner arrived with two grease-stained letters for the Mounted Police. One, said rumour, was from Hornby saying that Bullock was going crazy, and the other was from Bullock saying Hornby had gone crazy.

What Constables Baker and Hawkins said two days later when they mushed out of the fort behind a skin-clad Slavey guide for a six hundred mile return jaunt into the heart of the Arctic Barrens to investigate was plenty.

Three weeks later the frost-scarred patrol halted their huskies before the snow-bound wolf den. From the bowels of the earth emerged a tousled figure. Grimy of face, with sunken eyes, and black beard streaming in the wind, the spectral figure padded towards them. "How do you do!" exclaimed the Hermit of the Barrens, with a formal bow that seemed ridiculous. "Won't you drop in and have a spot of tea?"

Hawkins' eyes were searching the drifts. Where was Captain Bullock? Another shaggy head emerged. So — Bullock was at least alive.

With a regal gesture Hornby ushered them into the reeking wolf den. Choking and coughing, they squatted on the frozen carcass of a wolf. Hornby, the perfect host, hovered around the smoking stove like a witch around her cauldron, made tea in a greasy kettle and handed the nauseating brew to the visitors. Presiding over the doubtful repast with all the eclat of a Mayfair hostess, he gave each a battered plate containing an unappetising cinder, allegedly a caribou steak.

Thin, gaunt and cadaverous, Bullock attacked his meal like a hungry huskie. In an atmosphere charged with suspicion the Mounties sat around. No murder had been committed . . no one seemed altogether crazy . . there was nothing to do but hoof it back to Fort Resolution and report.

"Your first trip into the Barrens?" It was Hornby who broke the ice.

"Yes," admitted Hawkins.

"Fine country," enthused Hornby. "No neighbours looking over the back fence and all that stuff . . Er—where do you go from here?"

"Back to Resolution," answered Hawkins.

"Why," remonstrated the little man, "you haven't seen my country yet. Now you've got the chance you should take a look around. For instance, a trip to the mouth of the Back's River and back by Hudson Bay. Wonderful trip—wonderful trip!"

"Only trouble," grunted Baker, "it's a couple of thousand miles out of our way—and we're kind of low on moccasins and grub."

"How about a little dessert?" suggested Hornby.

"Yes," laughed Hornby, "a little pink ice cream." An armful of caribou shin bones rattled on the floor. "This," he cracked one open with an axe and nibbled the frozen marrow, "is an epicurean treat you get only in the Barrens."

"Pink ice cream!" growled Hawkins as they whipped up their dogs and headed across the tundra. "Those birds are nuts!"

* * *

Solomon Ford, Hudson's Bay factor at Chesterfield Inlet, lowered his telescope with a snort. What he'd looked for was the annual supply ship, the *Nascopie*. What he saw was two tattered scarecrows paddling a battered canoe that moved like a crippled gull towards the post . . and coming from the west!

"Where in hell!" the factor eyed the tattered scarecrows that reeled ashore with amazement, "did you birds come from?"

"Fort Resolution," remarked Hornby casually, knowing that it was like the other side of the world to the people of Hudson Bay. "Meet Captain Critchell-Bullock of the Hornby-Bullock Expedition!"

"Captain!" the factor gasped and sniffed. "Say—isn't there something rotten in your outfit?"

Bullock heaved a chunk of rotten meat to the huskies. "You see," he smiled wanly, "we weren't quite sure if this *was* the post or if we were just seeing things . . a mirage, you know. And, *that* happened to be the very last of our grub."

Bullock didn't add that that gruelling, seven hundred mile canoe trip from the wolf den in the Barrens to this lone outpost on Hudson Bay had been one long, awful fight with hardship and starvation; that many a day he had expected to leave his emaciated body for the wolves and foxes to devour. They had caught a fleeting glimpse of the musk-oxen all right. But in toil and hardship and starvation it sure had cost them plenty!

"Come on," Ford invited, "you sure look as though you could stand a square meal."

"Too bad," exclaimed Hornby as they lay in their bedrolls that evening, "too bad."

"What's too bad?" growled Bullock.

"Those damned Mounties ruined my plans last winter," exclaimed Hornby. "I got a wonderful idea. Mentioned to a trapper that I thought you were going bughouse, and figured you might try and murder me."

Bullock shot bolt upright.

"Well," exclaimed the lord of the tundra impatiently, "I figured if that story got to the press the eyes of the world would be turned on our expedition. Think of the suspense after weeks and months went by . . and not a word from either of us. Then the write-ups we would get when we turned up safe and sound in Montreal. The publicity would have put us on our feet financially, but I hadn't counted on Sergeant Clifford sending out that patrol. Didn't you notice how queerly Baker and Hawkins looked at you? Those Mounted Police," Hornby shook his head, "are too darned conscientious. Of course, Bullock, you're not sore, are you?"

But Bullock was merely speechless.

"We had a tough time," admitted Hornby uneasily, "but we can organize a bigger and better expedition once we get Outside."

"But damn it, man," Bullock was staring at him in blank amazement, "the money's gone . . and my scientific stuff's still unused in that cache at Fort Reliance. We've nothing to show for the year we've wasted."

As they boarded the *Nascopie* and headed through ice-choked Hudson Straits for Montreal,

Bullock remained strangely unenthusiastic to the Hermit's pleas for a second expedition. Hornby had kept his promise. He had taught him how to starve—and how to freeze as well. But the secrets of the Barrens still remained locked within the Hermit's bosom.

* * *

The tragic story of Hornby's last and final trip into the Barrens will be related in the next issue.

Editor's Note: There is a particularly close link between Jack Hornby and the University of Alberta. Not only was "the Hermit of the Barrens" a frequent visitor to the University, there are to be seen in a glass case in the museum on the third floor, Eskimo bows, arrows and other curios donated by him.

SOCIAL

First Masonic Ball

Highland Scottishe, quadrille, cottillion, reel, waltz galop. "Not the least remarkable feature was the number of ladies, 16, the largest number ever gotten together at any affair of the kind in Edmonton within the memory of man. Although only one gentleman appeared in claw-hammer coat there was more lace, frillings, kid gloves, black cloth, starched linen and store clothes generally than could have been collected in any previous year in the whole Saskatchewan country."

Indian Woman Has Revealing Dream

Edmonton Journal, August, 1945

Grande Prairie:

"Stranger than fiction is the true story of the finding of the bodies of two trappers and guides, Archie Belcourt and Josie LeTan, of Rio Grande, who were drowned in the headwaters of the Wapiti River on June 11th. Attempting to ford the Wapiti when spring flood waters were high while guiding a survey party, the two men were swept from their horses and carried away by the current. Although a search was made at once, and other search parties organized later, no trace of the bodies could be found.

An Indian woman on the Horse Lake Reserve fifty miles from Rio Grande, and a hundred more from the scene of the drowning, had a dream about a month later. She dreamed that her husband who had been drowned in just such an accident on the same river some years earlier, came to her and led her to the exact spot on the Wapiti where the bodies could be found. The story of this vivid dream came to the ears of the wife of Josie LeTan, and she asked the woman to help in the new search.

The woman consented, although she had never been to the Wapiti. She insisted, however, that a certain guide, known to her husband, must row the boat for so it had been in her dream. They would find the bodies about two days travel down river from the scene of the drowning, she told them. The body of Belcourt would be found first, close to shore, and lout of the water. The body of

LeTan would be on the opposite shore some distance down and held in the water by driftwood.

Arrived at the scene of the drowning the party started downstream. They made camp the first night as directed by the Indian woman. Near the end of the second day the woman suddenly exclaimed: "This is the place I saw in my dream. You will find the body of Archie Belcourt there."

They landed and found a skeleton on the flat shore. The wolves had been there first. The body was identified by a large metal belt buckle which Belcourt always wore. Some distance downstream on the opposite shore they found the body of LeTan, held in the water by two logs.

The remains were removed to Rio Grande, where funeral services were held in the Rio Grande Roman Catholic Church on Aug. 9th, Reverend Father Murphy officiating. Interment was in Rio Grande Cemetery. Rio Grande is forty miles west of Grande Prairie."

Editor's Note: In the course of my travels throughout the Northland I have come across numerous equally astonishing instances of native clairvoyance revealed through the medium of dreams. There is also the historic King murder case where the brother of the murdered man, following a dream, left England for Edmonton and identified the killer immediately, though he had never seen him before.

Unusual Things Happen in Calgary

By
Robert E. Gard

Alberta seems like a fabulous country where anything can happen. If a story sounds logical people scarcely believe it, but if it's fabulous they know it has a ring of honest truth.

For instance we really have fine weather here in Calgary. Still, not content to say our weather is good; it has to be extraordinary. To do this we make lots of tales. An Easterner was visiting one of our ranches. He saw, hanging from the limb of a tree, a great logging chain with heavy steel links. "What's that for?" asked the Easterner. "That's how we measure the wind," replied the rancher. "When the chain rattles a bit it's a breeze. When she swings it's a wind. When it blows out straight like a pennant—it's a gale."

Along with the tales of high winds go sagas of the marvellous sharpness of the air of southern Alberta. People gasp with wonder when they first see Calgary, because every building looks as though it had been cut out of cardboard, and set neatly on a clean stage with an unbelievably blue sky for a background. Sometimes you'll see a mirage—a group of elevators up in the sky, or the reflection, high in the air, of a whole village. But even without the mirage distances are deceptive. Look at the mountains on a clear bright day and you'll figure you could go over and touch them. But they're really a hundred miles away. One time a stranger stood admiring the scenery to the west. People asked him to guess how

far the mountains were away. He was astonished to learn that, instead of his guess of twenty miles, they were over three times that distance. The stranger thought that over for a while, then turned to a man who was standing nearby and said: "What a stupendous country!" The man he spoke to happened to be stone deaf, and didn't hear. The stranger looked at him for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders. "How dumb of me," he said to himself, "I should have realized that guy's probably fifteen miles away!"

Christmas Tree King

How many business pioneers have built up a thriving concern, only to find themselves driven to the wall by others? That is what Indians on the Sarcee Reserve are finding in recent years, as a trade, which they introduced into Calgary many years ago, gradually dwindles out of their control.

There are still many old-timers who remember the Sarcee brave, Foxtail, who died a few years ago at the ripe old age of ninety-one. Foxtail always had an urge for business, and seized upon the Christmas festivities of the Bow and Elbow to augment his income with a winter harvest hitherto unknown to other members of his tribe. For it was Foxtail who first capitalized the Christmas celebrations in Calgary by bringing in a sleigh-load of suitable evergreen spruce trees from the reserve. These he quickly disposed of in the little settlement—at prices compared with the present rates.

From that day until his death Foxtail was "Christmas Tree King" of the reserve. The annual harvest developed with the city until it was the principal source providing the Sarcee band with ready cash for their tribal festivities on the twenty-sixth, which is the day when the communal celebrations are held on the reserve.

But the Indian no longer controls the sales. Even at the low value at which he rates his labour he cannot compete with his white brother who trucks evergreens into the city and sells them at a profit.

A few Sarcees still bring in their loads of trees, mostly catering to a trade among the pioneers who, for sentimental reasons, still prefer to patronize Calgary's first Christmas tree merchants. But, generally, Chief Joe Big Plume's sentiments express the situation. "Business no good," he said. "Not worth while bringing trees in. Too many trees now. White man, he got it all!"

But if the Indian has lost the trade, many local farmers and residents glean a little added revenue from the trade which the Indians developed.

The Fur War Strategy

A Story of Old Fort Chipewyan

By
J. H. Mosgrove

The strife of over a quarter of a century between Hudson's Bay men and Nor'Westers for monopoly of the Athabasca fur trade had been the battle of the giants. Out in these vast domains servants of the respective companies were exhausted from the terrible struggle.

When news of the massacre of Seven Oaks and the killing of Governor Semple reached London, the British Government awakened to the seriousness of affairs in the great north hinterland. When further tidings reached Montreal that Fort Douglas had fallen into the hands of the Nor-Westers, and Fort William to Lord Selkirk, Governor-General Sherbrooke issued a proclamation in May, 1817, commanding the two companies to desist from further disorders and restore each other's property.

However, royal edicts had little or no authority in a realm which knew neither law of God or man. Not a *voyageur*, not a Canadian trader flinched in his loyalty to the Nor'West Company. Not an official, not a servant, but what remained true to the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. It was a fight to the bitter end.

Among the stormy antagonists in the long struggle was Colin Robertson of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose bullying commands and brawls echoed from Labrador to New Caledonia. He was ice-bound at Moose Factory on James' Bay when news of the Nor'Westers success on Red River and Selkirk's victory on Lake Superior, reached him. To Robertson peace could only be attained by sending a second expedition to wrest Fort Chipewyan and the trade of Athabasca from the Nor'-Westers, whence came the vast wealth of furs that enabled that company to bribe the courts of Montreal. Accordingly he set out from James' Bay in mid-winter on a 1,700 mile snowshoe trek to the metropolis.

By April, 1819, he was on his way back to Athabasca with a flotilla of nineteen canoes manned by hard-bitten *voyageurs* to put his plan into effect. October saw Robertson at Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca with a hundred and thirty seasoned veterans of the struggle. Here the power of the dynamic Nor'Westers was supreme. Not an Indian dared approach. All had been driven back from the river by McGillivray. In all that vast land not a soul was to be seen. Passing down the river Robertson's *voyageurs* sang songs of courage, his men firing guns to let the Indians know they were there. Finally an Indian was seen hiding behind the bush watching the flotilla pass, and was bribed to fetch his tribesmen. The truth was told to wide-eyed Chipewyans about the Hudson's Bay Company's success at Fort William. Peace pipes were smoked and treaty made. Ere trouble could brew, Robertson marshalled his

forces to the old Hudson's Bay post at Fort Chipewyan, and within a few days more than forty Indians had deserted the Nor'-Westers.

The consternation of the Nor'-Westers at Robertson's audacity knew no bounds. Full of resentment, they challenged him to fight. Every evening shortly before sundown groups of angry men appeared before the Hudson's Bay post, defying them to a pitched battle.

One morning, late in October, as Robertson breakfasted a *voyageur* entered with word that a Nor'-West bully was swaggering before the gates, daring any of his servants to come out and fight.

Angered by these persistent challenges, Robertson slipped a pistol in his pocket and strode through the gate to meet his antagonists. As he approached the bully he was suddenly overpowered by ten Nor'Westers led by Simon McGillivray, who made a rush upon him from concealment. Dragging him to the beach they threw him into one of the canoes. Robertson tried to upset the craft and escape by swimming, but one of his captors jammed a pistol against his head and held it there until they arrived at the Nor'-Westers post.

Ruinous law suits against the Canadian company restrained them from doing away with Robertson, but he was clapped into a small room, under guard day and night, and compelled to state his wants in writing. One of his written requests was that a Nor'-Wester go across to the Hudson's Bay fort under a flag of truce for a keg of liquor. The Nor'Westers were delighted at the chance to spy upon the post, as well as the prospect of having their captive befuddled with drink.

Taking a long strip of paper, Robertson invented a cipher code in numbers from one to six hundred, placing trade phrases against each number. This he rolled into a spool, sealing each end with wax; knocked out the bung of the whiskey barrel, bored a tiny hole inside the bung with his knife, hooked a piece of twine through one end of the sealed message, the other to the inner end of the plug, thrust the paper inside the liquor, and plugged up the hole.

Dusting the bung over with mud from the cell floor, he complained that the whiskey was musty, requesting that it be sent back with orders for his men to *wash out* the barrel and re-fill it.

Unsuspecting, the Nor'Westers returned the keg, but to Robertson's disgust the men at the fort, instead of cleaning out the barrel and finding his note, sent back a fresh one.

After several months of passing whiskey barrel messages in code a Nor'Wester caught Robertson in the act of sealing up the bung in the whiskey keg—and the cat was out of the bag. The angry traders promptly decided he was far too dangerous a man to keep around and planned to ship him out of the Athabasca country by the June fur brigade to Montreal. At Cumberland House, where the brigade camped overnight, Robertson asked permission to bid farewell to his old friends over at the Hudson's Bay fort. No sooner had he entered the gates than the bolts were shot, and every man prepared to fire upon any Nor'-Westers who might approach.

Feeling that it was dishonourable to break his parole, an unusual trait in a fur trader of those days, Robertson proposed to return. But the Hudson's Bay men would have none of it, and as the sun rose above the white-capped waters of Sturgeon Lake the following morning, he saw the opposition brigade disappear with flashing paddles around a wooded point.

The Trailing of Ole Micklesen

By
Anne Hall-Parlby
(Long Valley Ranch)

In November, 1892, Alberta was shocked by the news of a brutal murder. He was an American, a farmer just arrived from the United States to settle near Edmonton. Accompanying him was his hired man, Ole Micklesen. In those days the newly built C. & E. Railway stopped on the south side of the Saskatchewan River at Strathcona, and one had to cross by ferry to Edmonton. The farmer and Micklesen had stayed the night at the Strathcona Hotel and the next morning started to walk down the lonely road to the ferry.

The farmer had brought quite a sum of money with him, which he intended to deposit in an Edmonton bank. Micklesen knew this, and realized that his only chance to steal the money was before it was deposited. At a bend of the road, when he thought he would not be seen, he killed and robbed the poor man. It was early in the morning so few people were using the ferry, and the murderer might easily have escaped and never been caught had not some Mounted Police come riding up the road from the ferry just in time to see a man pushing through the thick brush in a suspicious manner. A few moments later they found the body of the murdered man. The fleeting glimpse they caught of Micklesen enabled them to give some description of his appearance, and a warrant was at once issued for his arrest. Such indigation over the murder was aroused that a reward was offered for the murderer's capture, dead or alive.

Micklesen, however, had managed to make his escape for the time being by stealing a handcar and was heading south on the railway. Promptly a Mounted Policeman was ordered to patrol the railroad bridge across the Red Deer River.

At that time my eldest brother, F. E. Wilkins, owned "The Valley Ranch," about two miles up-river from Red Deer. The first news we had of the tragedy was on the Sunday evening when some friends came to spend the evening. They warned us to keep a good lookout for any suspicious character, as Micklesen was known to be travelling south with the handcar, and the railway passed through my brother's land three quarters of a mile behind the house. Furthermore, my mother and I were

often alone nearly all day as my brother was at his office in Red Deer.

It seemed such an unlikely thing, however, that the fugitive would stop to molest anyone at a farm that we treated the warning as a joke, and I remember pointing to a stack of my brother's guns in a corner and saying that mother and I were well armed anyway.

On the Monday morning, after my brother had left for town, mother and I were busy working on a rug when we heard the most awful shouts coming from the foot of the hill near the railway. It was a very mild day for November, and the river was not frozen over — which really proved the murderer's undoing, as you shall hear.

When we heard the yelling I rushed out of the house, followed by mother, and saw in the distance Mr. Plumb, a neighbour, on a pony, galloping like mad towards us and waving a revolver. I ran to meet him, but he waved me back. "Quick!" he shouted, "get into the house — the murderer's coming. He's shot at me twice and attacked me with a knife."

Imagine the shock it gave us.

Plumb hurriedly told us that, that morning, a man answering the description of Micklesen had come up to where his neighbour, Armstrong, was working and demanded food. (It was learned later that Micklesen's handcar was disabled, forcing him to leave it and he was walking along the railway track.)

Armstrong, who'd heard of the slaying, seeing that he answered the description of the wanted man, started backing off toward where the Bells lived, so as to alarm them. Taking fright at this Micklesen began running and disappeared into the thick brush in the direction of the river. Armstrong alarmed William and George Bell, who seized their guns and, with "Teddy" Plumb, gave chase, and saw to their dismay the man heading in the direction of the Valley Ranch, where they knew mother and I would be alone at that time of day. The thought that an elderly woman and a young girl might soon be unexpectedly face to face with a desperate man decided them to stop him at any cost.

While the Bells and Armstrong pursued the man, Plumb tore off at full gallop to warn us of our danger.

Micklesen had hoped to get into a thick grove of spruce trees west of our land, but it was on the south side of the river and he, not knowing the country, found himself cornered.

The pursuing party had now been recruited by other settlers. They called on the murderer to surrender, but Micklesen evidently decided to fight to the death.

George Smith had a marvellous escape, for as they cautiously crept through the bush into which Micklesen had disappeared, he came face to face with him, a revolver in each hand, one of which was aimed straight at his head.

"If his foot hadn't slipped on the bank I'd have been a goner," Smith told us.

Meanwhile Micklesen managed to evade the posse again, for he could run like a deer.

By this time the hunted and hunters were within sight of our house. There was a sharp interchange of bullets, Micklesen shooting to kill.

As we stood watching the battle a little man on a big black horse rode up. He had a revolver on his hip and a cartridge belt slung over his shoulder. It was Jack Jones on his famous horse, Sunbeam. A Texas Ranger, he was a dangerous man when aroused, although one of the kindest persons imaginable.

I showed him a gate, the quickest way to where the battle was raging, and ran beside Sunbeam across the field. As I was returning I ran into William Bell carrying his big rifle. He was very angry at seeing me out there, and insisted that I go into the house. The firing was continuous by this time, shooting wild, and bullets flying in all directions.

Whenever the men ordered Micklesen to surrender, and fired in the air to scare him, he shot right back at them. He had two revolvers and, as was afterwards found, quite a lot of ammunition.

Mother and I were still standing just outside the door when suddenly a figure jumped the fence into our big field, and began running for the house, leaving the crowd behind him. We realized with a shock that it was the murderer, and he was heading right for us.

In a flash I thought I must run into the house and get one of the guns, when we saw his cap fly off and he pitched forward on his face and lay still.

As the crowd gathered around the man my mother told me to go and say that if he was wounded just to bring him into the house. But the man was dead! The men had been forbearing. They could have killed Micklesen a dozen times. It was not until he started running for our house that William Bell, seeing our terrible danger, aimed with his big rifle and shot him through the heart.

Just then my brother came galloping up on a friend's racing horse. As he thundered down towards the house a heavy bullet sang past him, and it was thought it was the one that killed Micklesen.

Everyone gathered in the house and mother and I gave them hot tea, for they were beginning to feel the strain. I shall always remember poor William Bell's worried face. He hated, I know, to think he had killed a man, even a cruel murderer, but if he had not acted quickly it is most probable that I would not be alive today to be writing this account of a very hectic day in my life over fifty years later.

Micklesen's guilt was established for they found the money of the murdered man and, among other things, a Bible!

In the course of the years the usual legends have sprung up about the place where Micklesen was shot being haunted, and I believe a nervous group of berry pickers along the river bank close by declared that they saw a ghostly face peering at them from the bushes. However, I can truthfully say that none of the family ever saw anything even faintly resembling a ghost either in the pasture where the man died, or on my son's place where the murderer was buried.

Men of the Hudson's Bay

Authorized version by R. H. Hall, District Officer, Saskatchewan District —afterwards Fur Trade Commissioner for all Canada

Contributed by Jean W. Godsell

Tinkling bells are heard from afar
Guided south by a Christmas star.
Tell us who these wanderers are,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

The gliding dog sleds loom in sight
From weary waste of Arctic night,
With greetings from these men of might,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

Scattered far o'er that far North land,
Toil and labour that stalwart band,
Wielding the pen or the strong right hand,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

Fearless and true to the very last,
Careless of danger or icy blast,
Or roaring rapid running fast,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

Though far from home 'mong solitudes drear,
Far from all that is near and dear,
Full of charity, knowing not fear,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

Sad sometimes when far away
From boyhood's home and childhood's play,
Saddest, perhaps on Christmas day,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

When happy at home amongst Yuletide cheer,
Loved ones gather from far and near,
Think of the absent one so dear,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

Think of them kindly, well 'tis worth,
Of those who to danger and toil go forth.
Send kindest wishes from furthest north,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

* * * *

Revised version by H. L. Belanger, Alex Seymour, P. E. Carre, Captain F. B. Haight (formerly of Athabasca River Transport), and F. Seguin, formerly of Fort S. John, B.C., and Fort Resolution, N.W.T.

Tinkling bells are heard from afar
Guided south by a Christmas *Jar*,
Tell us who those roisterers are—
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

The howling huskies heave in sight
From weary wastes of Arctic night,
With greetings from these men of might,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

Scattered far o'er that wild North land,
Whoop and holler that merry band,
With a bottle of *Burke's* in either hand,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

Robbers and thieves to the very last,
With the *Skull and Crossbones* nailed to the mast,
And the wrath of God a'comin' fast—
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

Though far from home 'mid solitudes drear,
There's always *One* that is near and dear
(And sometimes several) the hearts to cheer
Of the Men of the Hudson's Bay.

Full sometimes, though far away
From boyhood's home and childhood's play;
Fullest, perhaps, on Christmas day,
The men of the Hudson's Bay.

Think of them kindly, with all their faults,
Send them a *Case* from the Depot vaults
And a dozen bottles of Eno's Salts
To the men of the Hudson's Bay.

Editor's Note: In December, 1905, Chief Factor R. H. Hall, District Officer for the Saskatchewan District, and afterwards Fur Trade Commissioner for all of Canada, sent to each post in his district, with Christmas greetings, a copy of the authorized version, as above.

By the same dog-team there arrived at Cumberland House post three cases of Burke's Irish whiskey. After dinner on Christmas day, the "divine afflatus" was in full swing. The staff—Horace Belanger, P. E. Carre and Alex Seymour, ably assisted by Captain F. H. Haight and Frank Seguin, who were visiting factors—decided that if a District Officer could write poetry there would be no harm in following his example. The result of the collaboration was the "revised version" as given above.—P.H.G.

Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 21/81

Advertisement

—

Edmonton Hotel
The Pioneer House of Entertainment west of Portage la Prairie

—

Pemmican and dried buffalo has long been a stranger at the table, and its place has been taken by substantials more in keeping with the onward march of civilization.

A cosy billiard room where the Edmonton coal can be seen burning to advantage.

Good stabling attached.

DONALD ROSS, Proprietor.

Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 25/82

$8 worth of coarse gold found in the stomach of a cow killed at Pincher Creek last summer. Lots of prospecting took place but no finds. There are two theories with regard to the find: one is that the cow licked up the gold while licking at alkali spot of ground. The other is that years ago miners came across the grounds, were murdered by the Indians in the neighbourhood, and the cow had picked up the leather wallet of one of them containing the gold.

Here is a very curious incident. During the war, when the government agents were here buying remounts for the army, a man from Okotoks brought in a horse for which the buyer agreed to give $175 less 7½ percent. Not being well up in arithmetic the Okotoks man was a bit dubious what the $175 would be cut down to with the 7½ percent reduction. So he decided to ask a young lady bookkeeper whom he happened to know slightly.

Calling at her office the following day he approached the lady with a very ingratiating smile and said: "Good morning, Miss ———. Delightful weather, ain't it? Now, tell me. If I were to give you $175 less 7½ per cent, **how much would you take off?**"

Figuring it out the young lady promptly went and told her employer that she had been insulted.

The Sarcee Maid

On the calm summer evening of 1867 Father Lacombe sat smoking his pipe with a group of headmen in a prairie encampment of Plains Crees. Suddenly the quiet was broken by the war chant of the tribe and young warriors, returning from the hunt, thundered wildly into the camp. They'd had a brush with a party of Sarcees, and had brought home a prisoner, a young woman whose husband had fallen in the fray.

Proudly she sat her pony in the midst of the hostile camp. She wore a robe of white deerskin, her dusky hair fell loose about her shoulders, while her great dark eyes blazed defiance at her foes. Then she espied the good priest sitting amongst the chiefs. Leaping from her horse she threw herself at his feet, claiming a sanctuary she sensed rather than knew. Gently Father Lacombe laid his hand upon her head.

"Who owns this young woman?" he eyed the painted braves.

"I do," a young warrior stepped jauntily forward.

"Then sell her to me," the priest requested.

"*Nemoyah*—No! I do not want to sell," came the defiant reply. "I have no wife, and no horse with which to buy one. I want this woman for myself."

"I will give you a horse for her," bargained Father Lacombe, "a new coat, leggings, tea and tobacco."

For a moment the savage pondered deeply. Ho! Ho!" he ejaculated, "you offer much. You may have her!"

"Now," the priest turned to the maid, "you belong to me. You must go where I wish, and do as I tell you."

The girl nodded submissively.

Already a scheme had flashed into Father Lacombe's subtle mind. He would convert the captive girl, then take her back to her people. She would thus make his welcome certain amongst the southern tribe amongst whom he had long wished to establish a mission. The Sarcee maid was sent to the Sisters at St. Albert, where she was treated kindly, and during the winter learned to talk English and adopt many of the ways of the palefaces.

When Father Lacombe called at the convent for his prisoner the following spring the Sisters didn't want to let her go. "Leave Marguerite with us," they said. "She is making such wonderful progress it would be a pity to take her back to her savage mode of life."

But the Father was adamant. "No! No!" he insisted, "She is gold, pure gold, to me! Her people are allied with the fierce and proud Blackfoot nation. They are my friends, though they do not respond to my treatment as the Crees do. But when I bring back Marguerite to them, safe and sound . . . ah! we will see what will happen then."

So Father Lacombe rode south with Alexis, his half-breed guide; with Susanne, an old Blackfoot squaw, and Marguerite. At last they sighted a circle of white teepees dotting the slope of a neighboring coulee. Marguerite

could hardly hold herself. "Those may be my people!" she ejaculated, beside herself with excitement.

"Good!" exclaimed Father Lacombe. "Raise the red cross flag, Alexis. Now, get into that tent, Marguerite, and stay there till I tell you to come out."

Within a few minutes Indians from the encampment herded over in all the barbarous panoply of paint and feathers to welcome "The Man of the Great Heart." Several were in mourning, shorn of their lank locks, their faces streaked with black paint.

"For whom are you in mourning?" demanded the wily prelate.

"Eight months ago," replied the Indians, "your friends, the Crees, attacked our camp. They killed some of our young men, and carried off one of our prettiest young women."

"And you never found her?" asked the priest.

"Her brothers searched all over for her. She has been carried to the Cree country. By now she must be dead. Never shall we see her face again."

"Marguerite!" Father Lacombe raised his voice.

Out of the tent leapt the lost maiden, well and happy, beside herself with joy at hearing once again the guttural tongue of her own people. One glance about then, with a glad cry, she flew straight into the arms of a leathery-faced old crone—her mother!

With shouts of surprise, with wild rejoicing, squaws pressed around Marguerite, and braves about Father Lacombe. In triumphant procession they brought him to their camp where there was a great feast of buffalo humps, tongues and other delicacies, and dancing that continued by the flickering light of campfires till far on into the night.

The priest's long-headed scheme was not long in paying dividends. Word of his action in buying the captive maid from their enemies, and bringing her safely back, spread by moccasin telegraph to the painted tepees of the Blackfeet. Soon the astute Father found more receptive ears into which to pour his teachings.

That was a sensible present the business friends of Frank Helm of the Union Bank gave the popular gentleman in honour of his recent wedding—a parlour suite and several useful accessories. How much better this was than the customary pickle-jar and silver-plated fish knife and fork. Apropos of tributes to a man's worth, did you ever hear the yarn about the Irishman who died and had a lot of floral offerings on his coffin? The deceased had begun his career at street work, digging sewers and cellars, but he afterwards became a rich contractor. The widow had put on a lot of society airs, and she walked into the room in which the coffin lay with a very haughty mien. The apartment was full of flowers and mourners. A prominent floral piece was an anchor. The widow gazed upon it. The idea that some of her cast-off friends were trying to disconcert her by calling up memories of former days came into her mind. Turning to the assembled company, she demanded: "Who the divil sint that pick?"

Medicine Rock, Lethbridge

Mike Mountain Horse
(Blackfoot)

In primitive days when countless herds of Buffalo roamed the prairie, the Blood tribe once made their winter quarters along the St. Mary River bottom, in the vicinity of the present city of Lethbridge.

One day an Indian, in quest of the bearded monarch of the plains, stood on top of the knoll above what is now known as Ashcroft Mine. Looking across the river he observed someone walking toward it from one of the neighbouring knolls south of what is now known as Brewery Road. Wondering who it could be, he turned north and, coming within the vicinity of the present C.P.R. high level bridge, descended to the river.

On his way across he looked again and saw the same person standing on the edge of the knoll, apparently in quest of something. On closer observation he could see that he was what was called a Medicine Pipe man. A Medicine Pipe man always dyes the blanket, or robe, which he wears a dark red. He also wears a tuft of hair in a little knot, about three or four inches long, on top of his forehead, and his face and hair are painted the same colour as an insignium of his position.

This fellow was finally observed by the warrior to descend the hill and make for the river bottom. On reaching the foot of the hill he squatted down, Indian fashion. The hunter, riding up, discovered nothing but a solid, reddish rock resembling a man in a sitting posture. He then descended the hill and looked in all directions, but failed to find a single living person. He again descended and offered prayers in close proximity to the rock.

The following night a stranger appeared to the hunter in his dreams. "My son," he said, "I am the rock you saw. I want you and your children to come and offer me peace offerings at all times."

From that time on this rock was known as Medicine Rock,, and was usually laden with gifts such as wearing apparel, tobacco and food. But the custom of offering these gifts has now long passed, and the rock is usually covered with dirt and coal slack.

Edmonton has now another claim to distinction and will no doubt trot it out when boasting of her stock-raising facilities. A lady named Mrs. Jabez M. Pease, wife of a settler who came in last fall, gave birth last week to quadruplets, or four at one clatter, as it were. This is the first time in Alberta's history that this sort of thing had happened. The auspicious event was somewhat marred by the unseemly fracas between the father of the quadruplets and the doctor, the trouble being due to a flippant remark made by the latter to the effect that the operation reminded him of shelling peas. The doctor, however, apologized later on for his ill-timed jest.

A Spirited Christmas

How Lethbridge Celebrated Yuletide

By
An Old Timer

Yuletide festivities at Lethbridge reached an all-time high on a bright and frosty Christmas day back in 1907 when Mayor Galbraith addressed a message to the assembled townsfolk, counselling peace on earth and good will to all men.

Only his speech was backed up by a grim-faced detachment of Mounties in Sam Brown's and side arms, and a cordon of city police, all considerably out of breath. For they'd had a deal of strenuous and unlooked for exercise on top of hearty Christmas dinners. And all because two cowboys had acquired, literally and figuratively, an overload of Xmas spirit! And the Mayor's address wasn't taken from the New Testament—it came directly from the *Riot Act.*

That morning Smoky Lee and Irish, from the Diamond K ranch, had careened into town on showy pintos, intent on a spot of celebration. Having mixed rye, Scotch and "red eye" with rare impartiality, and straddled seats at Mah Wong's lunch counter, the temptation to try the steadiness of their hands by shooting roseate tomatoes out of the cans lining the shelves became irresistible. Equally irresistible was the Celestial's wicked cleaver when it descended on Smoky's skull.

Beating a circuitous retreat with his wounded companion, Irish sent over his shoulder a sulphurous tirade at the Chinaman's unsportsmanlike behaviour in resisting a harmless display of animal spirits.

An hour later another cowboy from the same ranch hit town and, in answer to questions concerning the state of his friend who'd stopped the Chinaman's cleaver, replied laconically, "Oh! him—he's daid!"

Swiftly the grapevine carried word of the tragedy abroad. Soon a mob of wrathful citizens was milling around the cafe, intent on tearing things apart. Heavily fortified by festive jolts of "red eye" they made playful attempts to demolish the cafe, and, incidentally, other parts of the town, to display their indigation was hampered by the sudden interference of Chief Parry and a squad of none too gentle Mounties.

Thoughtfully the latter brought along a combined ambulance and "Black Maria" in the shape of a covered wagon. As protesting rioters were arrested and tossed inside it seen became obvious that the improvised patrol wagon had developed an astonishing elasticity in accommodating itself to the increasing load of prisoners. Then it was found that as the malcontents were loaded into the back they as promptly escaped from the front to join in the fracas.

It was at this moment, while the howling of the festive throng resembled a menagerie gone berserk, that the Mayor, hauled unceremoniously from a warm fireside and a contemplated cigar. ap-

peared upon the scene with bristling whiskers.

His dignity very much hurt when friendly admonition was answered by jeers, catcalls and unkindly missiles, he read the Riot Act and brought the noisy and destructive festivities to a close. Though no one had been seriously injured, many sported shiners and encarmined noses.

As things quietened down, a bereaved friend of the defunct cowboy spurred his horse towards the Diamond K ranch to arrange funeral plans. Halting at a roadside ranch where sounds of merriment sundered the frosty air he decided to drop in. To his amazement he observed, seated on an upturned soap-box, the supposedly dead cowboy sawing merrily away at a concertina in the centre of the orchestra! Sure, he admitted to a slight headache. He also bore an enormous "hen's egg" on his head—but otherwise, despite his contact with the blunt edge of Wong's cleaver, he was in reasonably good shape and certainly not ready for burial.

Apologies were extended to Mah Wong, reparations were duly made, and Lethbridge settled down to the even tenor of its way.

Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 31/81

Advertisement

"A pig of the Shanghai pattern (female gender) came to my premises two weeks ago. The owner had better pay expenses and take it away, otherwise the pig will mysteriously disappear."

DONALD ROSS.

"I'll never forget the night you proposed," said the wife. "You acted like a fish out of water."

"Yes, I was a sucker."

Then the gong sounded for the first round.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Portly, "apologized the hostess to her unexpected but influential guest at dinner, "but I have no cheese in the house."

"Pray do not mention it, Mrs. Phipps," smiled the old boy genially. "I am sure . . ."

His little compliment was interrupted by the appearance of the small son of his hostess at his side, bearing a piece of cheese upon a plate.

"Well, now, that is very kind of you, little man," he said as the child stood there, delightedly watching the old gentleman swallow the tid-bit. "You knew more than mother this time. Where did you find the cheese?"

The youngster intently watched the last morsel disappear before he answered:

"I found it in the mouse trap!"

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